



USDA Forest Service
Caribou-Targhee National Forest
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/caribou-targhee>

1405 Hollipark Drive
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401
(208) 524-7500



USDI Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District
<http://www.id.blm.gov/>

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review is the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for J.R. Simplot Company's Smoky Canyon Mine, Panels F and G Lease and Mine Plan Modification Project. Simplot is proposing to: 1) enlarge lease IDI-01441 to accommodate an expansion of the previously approved East overburden disposal area (ODA); 2) modify the approved mine plan for Panel F to allow for construction and use of an ore conveyance system between Panel F and the existing mill; 3) increase the ODA on the southwest side of existing lease IDI-01441 by 20 acres for the temporary storage of chert to be used for reclamation; and 4) utilize a geo-synthetic clay laminate liner (GCLL) in Panel G instead of the currently approved geologic store and release cover to reduce impacts to groundwater. The Final EIS was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Pocatello Field Office (lead agency) and the U.S. Forest Service, Caribou-Targhee National Forest (joint lead agency) with cooperation from the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality.

In addition to the Proposed Action, the Final EIS analyzes two Action Alternatives and the No Action Alternative. The action alternatives were formulated from public comments and agency concerns. Alternative 1 would be similar to the Proposed Action, except a combination of GCLL and geologic store and release cover would be used on the seleniferous overburden in Panel G. Under Alternative 2, the proposed lease modification area and expanded East ODA disturbance area would be smaller than under the Proposed Action or Alternative 1, and a combination of GCLL and geologic store and release cover would be used on the seleniferous overburden in Panel G. The No Action Alternative would be mining Panels F and G as currently authorized by the 2008 Records of Decision (RODs), issued by the BLM and USFS, and based on the 2007 Final EIS. Because these documents provide information related to the current analysis, copies of the 2007 Final EIS and 2008 RODs are included via CD for ease of reference.

Concurrent with the distribution of the Final EIS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Final EIS in the Federal Register. On the publication date of the EPA's NOA in the Federal Register, a 30-day availability period commenced. In addition to the EPA's NOA, the BLM published a separate NOA with additional information in the Federal Register and in local newspapers.

The Final EIS is a completed document. If you have information for agency consideration in making our decisions, it can be sent to the following addresses and must be received by the end of the 30-day availability period:

Email: blm_id_scm_panelsfg@blm.gov

Fax: (801) 942-1852

Mail: Panels F and G Lease and Mine Plan Modification Project EIS, Stantec, 8160 S. Highland Dr, Sandy, Utah 84093

Information provided for agency consideration, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the BLM Pocatello Field Office and subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). If you wish to withhold your name and/or address from public review or disclosure under the FOIA, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. The BLM will honor such requests to the extent allowable by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, are available for public inspection in their entirety.

The portion of the proposed project related to USFS special use authorizations for off-lease activities is subject to the objection process pursuant to 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B. Only those who previously submitted specific written comments on the Project during designated opportunities for public comment are eligible as objectors (36 CFR 218.5). BLM appeal procedures found in 43 CFR 4 apply to the portion of the Project related to the federal mineral lease(s).

The BLM and USFS will each issue separate RODs for decisions regarding their respective jurisdictions. A draft USFS ROD is available for review concurrent with the Final EIS; opportunities to object to the draft ROD within the 45 day-objection period are described in that separate document. The draft USFS ROD is being made available to people and entities on the Project mailing list, as well as the general public via the internet. The USFS will issue their final ROD for activities under their jurisdiction following the close of the objection period, and resolution period if needed, on the draft ROD. If no objection is filed on the draft USFS ROD, the USFS can implement their decision after five business days following the end of the 45-day objection period. If objections are received on the draft USFS ROD, the USFS must respond in writing to all objections and address all concerns and instructions identified in the objection response before signing the ROD and implementing the decision.

The BLM will issue a ROD for activities under their jurisdiction following the close of the 30-day availability period on the Final EIS. After publication of the BLM ROD there will be a 30-day appeal period before the BLM's decision becomes effective; the ROD will contain the appropriate instructions for appeal. Each final ROD will be made available to people and entities on the Project mailing list, as well as the general public via the internet.

Questions can be directed to Diane Wheeler, Project Lead, BLM at (208) 557-5839 or via email at dkwheeler@fs.fed.us.



Joe Kraayenbrink
District Manager
BLM Idaho Falls District



Garth Smelser
Forest Supervisor
Caribou-Targhee National Forest